

# INSTITUUT VIR EIETDSE GESKIEDENIS

Die Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat



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The Cape Times Jg..... Nr..... P..... 7..... Dat..... 12 0 3 1997

## US first lady visits Cape housing scheme

CYNTHIA VONGAI

The United States first lady Mrs Hillary Clinton yesterday commended women at the Victoria Mxenge Housing Initiative in Philippi for starting a successful housing project.

In a ceremony attended by National Housing Minister Ms Sankie Mthembu-Mahanyele and Cape Town mayor Ms Theresa Solomon, Clinton toured the site and looked at houses built by women belonging to the South African Homeless People's Federation (SAHPF).

She told a crowd of more than 100 people: "I can see that you have not only built houses ... but shown what can be accomplished if people work for themselves."

She said the Philippi women had set an example of what could be accomplished by starting self-help projects such as the one at Victoria Mxenge.

Clinton praised the women for taking the initiative in helping the government build South Africa into a great country.

"We are excited about what is happening in your country, and building a new country like you are doing is the work of everyone," she said.

However, she stressed that keeping a democracy strong would take hard work

with "everyone working together".

Co-ordinator for SAHPF Ms Pat Matolengwe said the project had been successful because of the hard work that the women had put into the housing initiative.

"We have the strength to build this country, and we do not have to wait for the government to support and help us," said Matolengwe.

"We can build 50 to 100 houses a month and we have decided to complete the project here at Victoria Mxenge by August, so that we can help other people with their building projects."

Thirteen out of the 18 houses built so far are already occupied, realising a goal of providing SAHPF members with housing and a better life.

Clinton also met Archbishop Desmond Tutu yesterday and attended a Truth and Reconciliation Commission meeting, before going to Cowley House in Woodstock.

She is scheduled to visit the University of Cape Town today, as well as meet President Nelson Mandela at a lavish dinner this evening on Robben Island. Other guests at the dinner will be Bill Cosby, Quincy Jones, and UN secretary-general Mr Kofi Annan.

Clinton is due to fly home tomorrow.

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